

March 11

PROGRAM

REHAB WORSHIP SERIES

Today's Sanctuary flowers provided by Phyllis Pohl to the glory of God in memory of Henry Pohl.

Today's choral selections are provided by the Temple Choir under the direction of Joan Nevill. Organist: Barbara Waite. Additional music selections provided by Temple Brass.

Ushers March 11: Greg & Linda Stilwell, captains; Chuck Taylor, Jacque Hardin, Dick Osmon, Nelson & Joyse Rivers
Ushers March 18: Eric Eades, captain; Seby Durgy, Chuck Taylor, Ronnie Pursley, Thornton Patberg (balcony), Margo Borre (balcony)
Greeters March 11: Marty Van Stone, Betty Schofield, Carla Bolin, Wanda Erwin
Greeters March 18: Warren Heinsohn, Janet Kissel, Pat & Ken Haynie

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

Temple Brass

WELCOME

PRELUDE

"Aberystwyth" by A. Grote

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: For God so loved the world;
People: In success and failure,
Leader: In sickness and health,
People: For God so loved the world;
Leader: Enough to become one of us,
People: Enough to suffer along with us,
Leader: Enough to offer new life to us.
People: For God so loved the world! Let us worship God!

CHORAL INTROIT

"Majesty, Worship His Majesty"

***CHIMES & SERVICES OF LIGHT**

***HYMN #108**

"God Hath Spoken by the Prophets"

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you.
People: And also with you.
Leader: Please turn to those around you and pass the peace of Christ.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Temple Brass

CALL TO PRAYER

Leader: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.
Leader: Let us pray as one.

PASTORAL PRAYER

All: Loving God, open our eyes to see the blessing of Your creation in the beauty all around us. Open our ears to hear the blessing of Your Word. Open our hearts to feel the blessing of a friend's love or the smile of a stranger. And open our lives, that we may become channels of Your blessing to the world. O God, hear us now as we pray, each in our own hearts and our own ways...

LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6:9-13 "Pray then like this: 'Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'"

GIVING TITHES & OFFERING

Temple Brass

***DOXOLOGY** *The congregation stands as the Ushers return the offering to the Altar.*

#95 in Hymnal

ANTHEM

"Without His Cross" - J. Martin

KIDZ MOMENT

SCRIPTURE READINGS

John 3:14-18

14 And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

17 "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18 Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

FAITH WE SING #2152

"Change My Heart, O God"

MESSAGE by Pastor Andy Payton

"Recovery"

Well good morning everyone. It feels like 8 a.m. by my watch. I hope you're all feeling very springy and wide awake at this point. This is probably the closest that I get to a sunrise service on this spring forward Sunday. Our theme for our Lenten season has been rehab and the idea is simple that the forty days leading up to Easter is really a season in which we are seeking to rehabilitate our faith in order that we might rise to new life, so we call it rehab. And our theme for this morning particularly is recovery. As we get started let's begin with the moment of prayer. Would you pray with me? O God, I do pray that you can help us to be present to you today even as you are here present with us. I pray that you would take the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts and that you would work to make them to be acceptable in your sight. We asked this in the name of Christ who is our rock and redeemer. Amen.

Of all the movies that my daughter Paige watches- Paige of course is my 3 year old- but of all the movies that Paige watches one of my favorite movies is one called The Secret Life of the Pets. Do you know the secret life of the pets anyone? Yeah, it's a great movie. It's a movie about two dogs who kind of lose their way. They run away from home, and it's over the course of one day they find their way back home. That's the secret life of the pets. And they have all these different adventures and different moments in which they talk to other pets and it's a really cute movie, but one of my favorite moments in the movie is when a Bulldog tells the other dogs a story about a time in which his owners tranquilized him. It's so funny. The little bulldog goes: First, they give me a pill. Next, I start to get tired and I fall asleep. Then, I wake up and I'm in a plane, and finally the next thing I know I'm on a beach in Florida. The bulldog then ends the story and he says that's the last time I'll take a pill like that... unless of course, he says, unless of course it has peanut butter on it because hey it's peanut butter.

Well I like that story because I think in many ways we see ourselves in that story. We, I suppose you could say, have all lost our way home in some capacity and we all struggle with the tendency to take the wrong proverbial pill which can get us into trouble. Our proverbial pill could be a habit, an attitude, or an action. Scripture tells us that our true home, as a people of God, our true home is in God's presence, but also Scripture tells us that we struggle with finding our way to that true home. We have attitudes, habits, and actions within our lives that keep us from reflecting everything that God has created us to become.

One story that comes to my mind from the Bible probably more than anything else that reflects this ongoing struggle we all have is the story of the people of Israel. I mean there are the ones right and their story is they will leave the land of Egypt and then for 40 years are in the wilderness and finally they go to the Promised Land. I think the power of that story friends is it's our story. We too are leaving the land of Egypt. We're leaving that place of bondage and brokenness and all of those things that have a hold of our lives and we find ourselves in the middle of the wilderness. And the wilderness sometimes takes forever to get through. It's hard to walk away from these things that have a hold of our lives but we do it in order to find our way to that home to that place of freedom.

One story that particularly comes to my mind with the Israelites comes from the Book of Numbers Chapter 21. You guys ever read that one? I have to be honest with you, it's not like a page turner. It's not like I just say I will get up today and will read from the book of Numbers. But there is a story in The Book of Numbers where the Israelites are traveling through the wilderness and they get grumpy. I'm sure we can resonate with that. And they get impatient. And they get mad at God. And finally they complain so much that God has enough of it, and sends snakes. God sends poisonous serpents, and the story goes they get bit by those serpents and then they have a change of heart because you know nothing like poisonous serpents to change our hearts And they cry out to God and say God help us. When God tells Moses to make a bronze serpent and hold up. All the people who look at the bronze serpent may be healed.

Now if you're like me and I don't I really kind of pray and hope that you're really not like me to be honest with you. But I'm a little off. But if you're like me, when you read a story like that there's this polite tendency within your heart that you just keep reading. Because what do you do with a story like that. I mean why would a loving God send poisonous servants to bite people? And so if you're like me you just kind of want to keep reading and find something else that's a little more, I don't know, closer to your own experience. But if you're also like me, you've learned to pause when you come to these moments, and before you keep reading, you learn to pray. And so when I do when I come to these stories I'm not sure what to do with within the scripture, and they're there, I first become aware that it's happening. Second I pray: God what in the world are you trying to teach me in this story? And then I've found that as I do that, God usually has a story behind the story to teach us.

This is true for this obscure story about Serpens biting the Israelites in the wilderness as they're moving from Egypt toward the Promised Land. As I begin to pray about this story what occurred to me is, well, it does have a lot to offer because we are like those Israelites. We're moving from that place of bondage, that place that has a hold of us, that place of captivity, and as we move from that place, we have moments in our lives in which things become painful and we get impatient. It's in those moments when we get impatient, that we are bitten if you will, we're bitten by the serpent that tells us go back to Egypt. Go back to those places that you know that you should not go. If anything this story teaches me at least a lot about the process of recovery -of letting go of those things that should not be within our lives, and the first thing I think this story teaches us is relapse is part of our recovery. Relapse is a part of our recovery. The Israelites wanted to go back to the place they shouldn't go. And we have all had those moments in which we want to go back to the place we know we should not go. In fact if you look at the entire story of the Israelites and like four different occasions they say you know what we'd be better off in Egypt. We'd be better off in that place of slavery we'd be better off in that place of bondage. We'd be better off if we never even left. And the truth of the matter is we've all been there. When life gets difficult and we tell ourselves you know it just be better off. If I was able to do that thing again. Id be better off if I go back to that have it again and be better off. You know it's true.

Statistics tell us though that within the recovery process, failure is a part of the recovery. In fact addicts fail time and time again as they're trying to get through and often they relapse many different times before they actually move from that place of an old habit to a new one. And those moments in which you tell yourself they'd be better off if you went back to that habit, that place that place of brokenness. In those moments when you find yourself struggling with that thing that you really just don't want to do, like the dog with the peanut butter, and let's say you even fail at it, these are not moments that you should feel guilt and shame. But they are opportunities to begin again. As JillAnn and wonderfully said just a while ago, sometimes our mistakes are the greatest glory sighting because they teach us.

So the first thing is relapse is part of recovery. The second thing I think the Israelites can teach us about recovery is they didn't travel alone. They traveled together. They traveled together.

I think this is one of the most powerful things about the church family. When we are at our best, we are a safe place for people to connect with one another and share their burdens with each other. Unfortunately churches have not always been a place where that can happen. Unfortunately, churches are sometimes a place where people are judged and condemned and put down for their mistakes and burdens. But when we're at our best, we are a place where healing can take place and we realize we're traveling together. Seeking to overcome those things that hold us captive. I learned this past week... really I was reminded this past week when I was at the youth meeting on Sunday night that the first time that God said that it wasn't good was when God created Adam and said it wasn't good for Adam to be alone. Adam needed Eve. We need one another just like Adam and Eve. My friend Nate tells me that his pastor often said growing up that a joy shared is twiced the joy and a burden shared is half the burden. It's within a community like this that we are able to share our true ways and share our burdens, and we can move through this process of recovery together.

Most importantly I think what this story about the snake can teach us about recovery is that recovery comes from a power greater than ourselves. I mean in the story of the snakes biting the people of Israel God told Moses to create serpent and hold it up everywhere it looks at the serpents healed. They needed a power greater themselves to heal them. And for us as Christians the power that is greater than ourselves that can heal us is the power of Christ, of course. Tucked away within our scripture lesson this wonderful verse where it says, just as Moses had to lift up the serpent in the wilderness so the son of man must be lifted up. Everyone who looks to him might have eternal life.

It's important for us to realize that the words eternal life within the gospel of John the verse we just heard doesn't just refer to life after death. I know that's the first thing I always think of when I see eternal life is it's about life after death. But the Gospel writer John, eternal life is life with God here and now also. It's the power of God here and now, helping us, healing us, restoring us, making us whole. And what the Gospel writer John is inviting us to do is in the midst of our brokenness or bondage, those moments in which we're struggling the worst with, the Gospel writer John is inviting us to do is to focus on Christ. And in doing so we find a power greater than ourselves that can help us through it.

Now I have to confess to you this is probably the hardest one of them all. I mean honestly, how do you put your trust in someone you've never seen? It's not like you have a picture of Jesus or a picture of God. I can't say this is what he looks like. This is who it is. It's hard. It's hard to surrender ourselves to this idea of God which is greater than ourselves. It just is. We give it lip service but if we're honest within our hearts we wrestle with this. One of the things you might have noticed this past open community we've had the world religions and every week we have had different people share their faith with us. As JillAnn said, it's been one of the most successful open communities we've ever had which is very curious to me. A Christian church talking about other faiths is interesting to people. That's curious to me. We've had more people show up for these open communities than we've ever had before- 115 120 people showing up every week. I mean this past week I went to Chick Fil'A to get chicken strips for people. I've never bought that many chicken strips in my entire life. I had 300 chicken strips coming out of Chick Fil'A this past week so we can all eat chicken before the Hindu shares about their faith... which is kind of ironic if you stop and think about it. You know what the advertising strategy of Chick Fil'A is Save a Cow.

One of the things people ask is why in the world would you care about other people of faith. In the midst of all this that's happening and all these people are coming in people ask is why why waste your time with other people of faith? I think one of the answers- not the only answer, but one of the answers is this: there will never be peace in this world until there's peace among the faiths. We can never be peace in this world until there's peace among the religious, and the first step towards peace is that we hear one another, that we love one another and that we at least try to understand our neighbors. But more than that as I have said to these sessions on world religion, the thing that I found most affirming is this: they are all pointing to a power greater than themselves. Whether it's the Catholic Christian or the guy from the Islamic Center or this past week the lady that told us about the Hindu faith, or even this upcoming week where the rabbi's going to share with us about his thoughts. They all in their own way point to this power greater than themselves that we all so desperately need. And that's not a cause for concern for me. This confirmation that we're reaching out for this presence that we all need within our lives. I think the greatest sin, the greatest temptation of them all friends is this: that we seek to live this life on our own, that we seek to overcome our struggles on our own, that we seek to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps, and we forget about God. I mean that's the original temptation right. Adam and Eve eat the fruit; they go their own way. They say we don't need you God. We're all doing that each in our own way. We don't need you. God we forget about you God. But deep down we need God. And so it is we as Christians proclaim the truth that there is a God and this God's here to help us. This God gives us the power to recover from the habits, the addictions, the attitudes, the actions that do not reflect the glory of God. This God gives us the power to overcome these things.

And we boldly proclaim our faith as Christians that God so loved us that God sent His only son that we might not perish but have eternal life, a life that's whole, a life that's restored. And so this week as you continue on your path to recovery and as I continue to walk with you, my path to recovery, may remember a few things. First be easy on ourselves. Relapse is part of recovery. Recovery doesn't travel alone. We need each other. But above all else remember, we need a power greater than ourselves if we are going to be restored. Amen.

***HYMN TFWS #2130**

"What Wondrous Love "

***CHIMES & SERVICE OF LIGHT**

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

"O God Beyond All Praising" by D. Cherwien